CASTLEMAINE NATURALIST

MARCH 1982 66

PLANTS OF THE CASTLEMAINE DISTRICT

SWAMP GUMS

by Ern Perkins

The patch of Swamp Gum at the edge of the old Koala Park was recorded in Castlemaine Naturalist 14.

Since then, Swamp Gums have been found on Fryers Ridge, just east of the fire tower. Here they are growing in low lying ground with Candlebarks and Long Leaf Box.

More recently, they have been found growing along the Faraday/Sutton Grange road by members of the Bendigo F.N.C. Castlemaine F.N.C. members have often gone past them without noticing them! Who knows what else we may have missed!

An easily found patch of swamp gum is growing about 50 m from the Mt Alexander turn-off, on the Faraday side of the Sutton Grange road. most of the specimens here are small, but there is one fine old gnarled tree.

The leaves are glossy green and broader than other local eucalypts and are often wavy. The buds are double conical, and the fruit are funnel shaped.

ANNUAL MEETING

The new Committee elected at the Annual Meeting —
President - Mr George Broadway
Vice-presidents - Mr Ern Perkins, Mr Ray Bradfield
Secretary - Mrs Merri Linsay
Treasurer - Mr Frank Meyer
Publicity - Mrs Rita Mills
Newsletter Editor - Mrs Rita Mills
Mr Geoff Sitch, Mrs Estelle Elliot, Mr Frank Blake,

THE SEASONS IN CASTLEMAINE

Retiring President, Geoff Sitch, gave a very interesting talk on the seasons of Castlemaine, illustrated by slides belonging to Ern Perkins.

It is a talk he has used several times when he has been guest speaker at other Clubs to commend the Castlemaine area as a place to visit.

It was a facinating experience to see our familiar territory and flowers through someone else's eyes.

Geoff emphasised the fact that the light varies concideräbly from season to season - hard and white in summer, golden in autumn, soft and often misty in winter.

Watching the slides as we went through the four seasons it became quite clear, and from now on when I'm out in the bush I doubt if I'll be unaware of the differences again.

The slides were a pleasure and gave us a great variety to see, from gums shedding their bark in summer and showing the colours of the new bark after rain, to close-up shots of flowers , including the minute flowers of the coffee bush; derilict miners' huts at Sandy Creek, and lichens on rocks at Newstead; from summer scenes of the Muckleford bush, to Autumn mist at Mt Alexander Golf Course, and frost encrusted buds of wattle in Kalimna Park.

Thanks Geoff and Ern.

JUNIOR NATS

I'm hoping that the younger members will use this page for their own contributions. It could be a report on something you've seen out the bush, in your own garden, or on holiday. You may, like Dean and Michael, write a little on your special interest. It needn't be long, but it would be good if you could do an illustration to go with it.

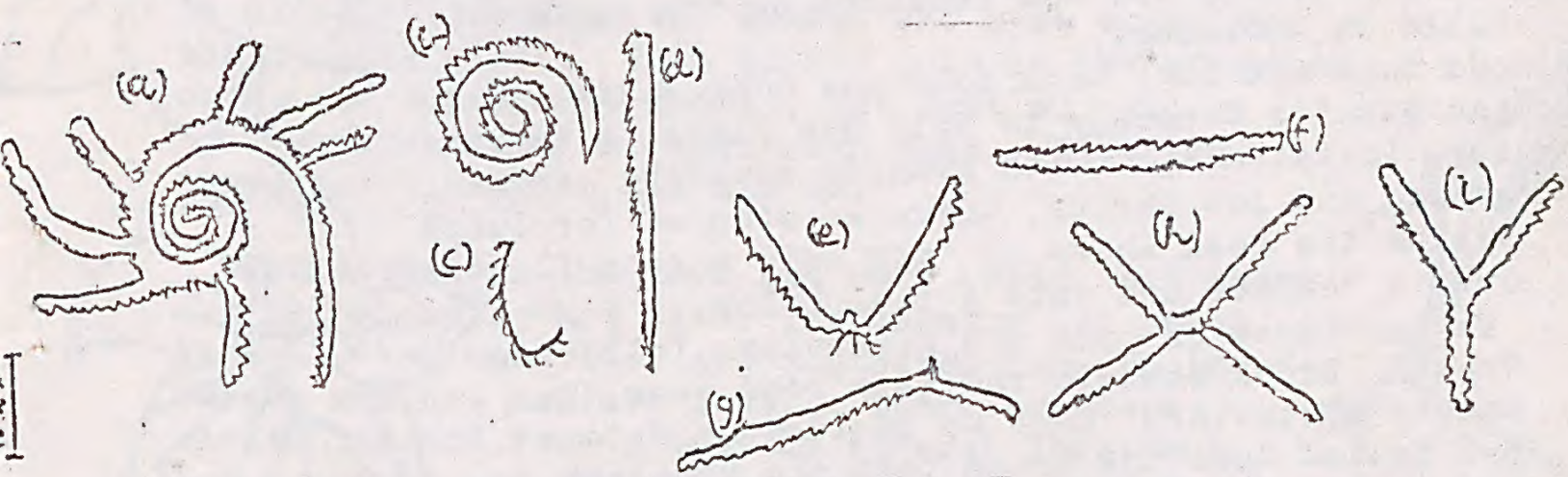
Ed.

GRAPTOLITES

— By Michael Vidovic
And Dean Wheeler

The Graptolites lived from 570 million years ago to 325 million years ago. They were floating animals which lived in the sea and can be found preserved in limestone and shale beds. When found they are carbonaceous impressions. They are many shapes and sizes. Most have at least 2 branches coming out of them, but some are just straight or oval shaped. One or both edges can be saw-toothed. In each tooth lived a polyp. Graptolites lived all around the world. Graptolites which floated normally attached to some floating plant but some lived on the sea bed.

Trilobites lived at the same time as Graptolites.



Shape of Graptoloid colonies - (a) Cyrtograptus (b,d,) Monograptus (c) Rastrites (e) Dicellograptus (f) Orthograptus (g) (g) Didymograptus (h) Tetragraptus (i) Dicranograptus.

Michael and Dean are in Year 8 (Form 2) at C.H.S.

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fifth were accomodated on the mother's back, the others dived or sometimes made a successful scrabble onto father's back.

To be Concluded next Month

FROM THE COMMITTEE

Letters were recieved form Mr Ebery, re the new mining legislation, and from Mr Ian Wilson, Federal Minister for Conservation, through Mr Bouchier, re the S.W. Tasmania issue, in reply to letters from us,

The Castlemaine Education Centres require clubs who use the Centre to have at least 80% of the members as members of the Centre. Application forms are available from the Treasurer who can also accept membership fees.

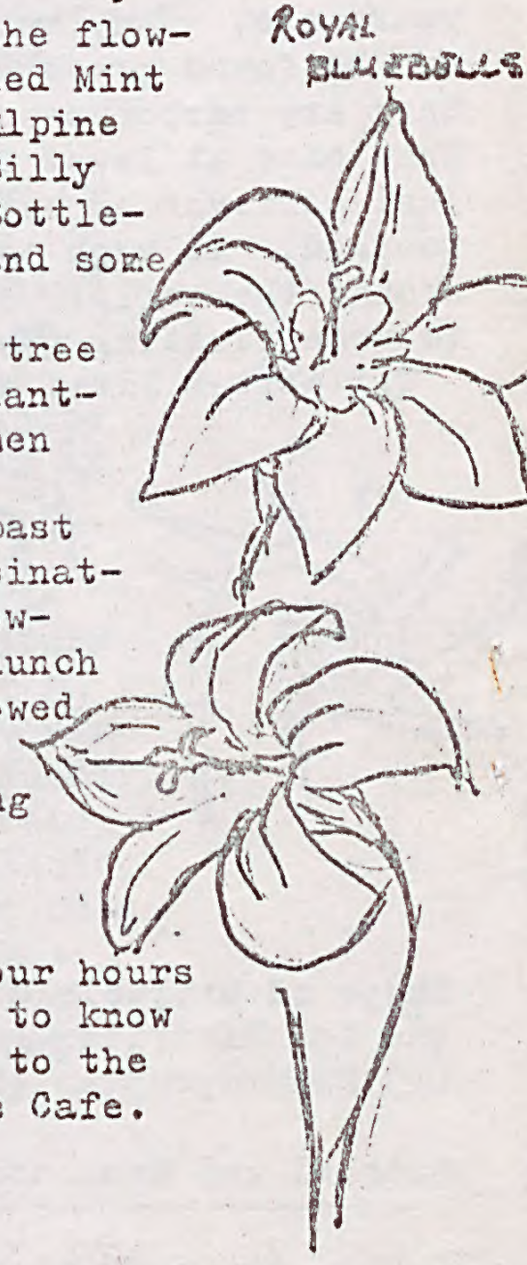
Finance : Cash in hand - $20-93, Bank - $59-48.
$22-09 was paid to the Ed. Centre

CAMPING AT MOUNT BUFFALO NATIONAL PARK

by Rita Mills

My husband, daughter and I spent the last week of January camping at Lake Catani on top of Mount Buffalo.

The season was late this year , so many of the flowers were still out, including the rare Blotched Mint Bush, Royal Bluebells, Orange Everlastings, Alpine Podelepis, the magenta Grass Trigger Plant, Billy Buttons (bright orange up there) and Alpine Bottlebrush, all within easy walking distance of (and some in) the camp.



We also saw Burgan, the long filamented tea tree which was found in the Moonlight Flat Pine Plantation recently and was featured on the specimen table in December.

We took one long walk, down the Long Plain, past the Giant's Causeway to Wild Dog Plain, a facinating, isolated spot with granite boulders, snowgrass, and low shrubs, where we stopped for lunch beside the road where an icy cold stream flowed over a boulder and into a pool below.

We continued on past the Reservoir, following Crystal Brook down to the main road near the Ranger's station. Here we decided to detour and headed down the track past the Monolith (we didn't climb it, we'd been walking for four hours by that time), through the Pig Run (I'd love to know why it's called that)and down the west gully to the Chalet, where we enjoyed afternoon tea at the Cafe.

Another, easier, walk we all enjoyed was to Dicksons Falls. It was here I saw Alpine Leek Orchids and a species of Gnat Orchid. The flowers I liked most on that walk were the prostrate Button Tea Trees (L. micromyrtus), which we saw near the falls. Doug and Merrilyn both enjoyed themselves watching young trout in the deep narrow streams.

Probably the most enjoyable aspect of the week was the birds, which were fairly confidant, without being a real nuisance, 'tho the Little Ravens did raid a carton of eggs which someone left unattended on a picnic table. They neatly heaved the carton over the edge of the table with a foot, and were set for a feast when the rather disconcerted owner of the eggs arrived back on the scene of the crime.

Our biggest thrill was having a young male lyrebird come down feeding just behind our tents on several occasions. We spent a long time following him, or just sitting on a rock watching him as he fed and put on impromptu performances for the benefit of some rock!

We also saw a pair of pilot birds on the way back from the Chalet.

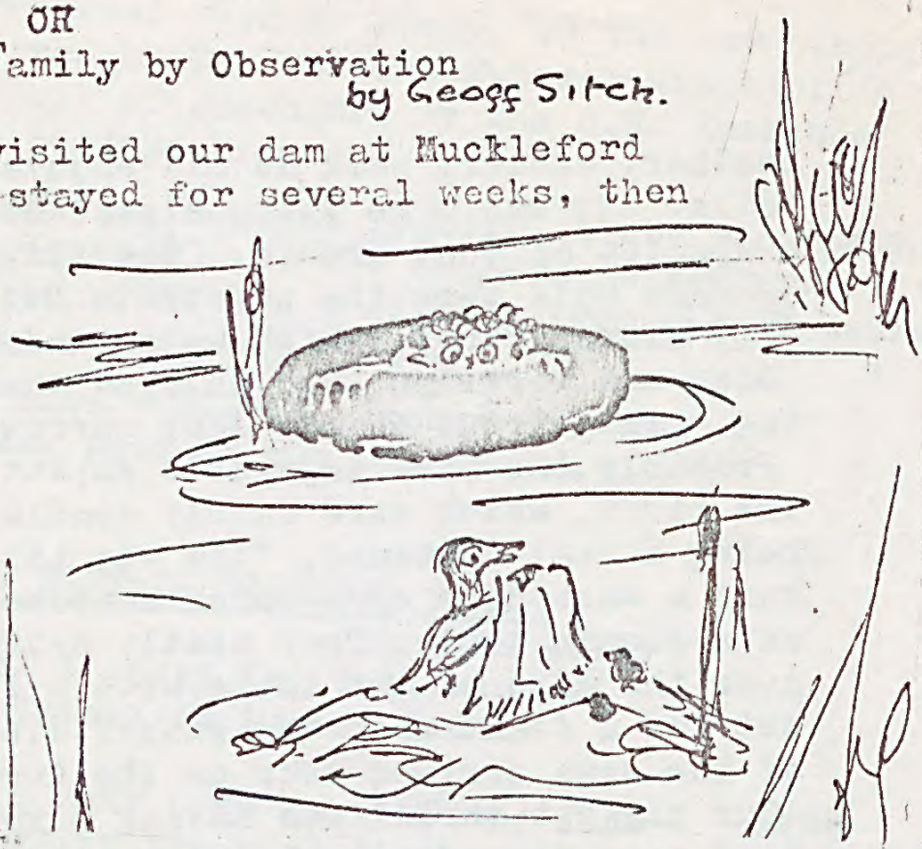
We didn't try any really hard climbing, and we met an elderly trio from the Chalet who were enjoying their fifth visit. They didn't join in the programs organised for Chalet guests, but just enjoyed 'pottering around' at their own pace. Each year they find plenty to see and do.

Facilities in the park are very basic, but there are hot showers, hot water for laundry (no power though), the campsites are scattered through the trees, and not all are level. There are taps, camptables and fire places at several locations, and a picnic shelter where cooking can be done on days of total fire ban - or downpours like we had on the Monday!

Information can be obtained from the Ranger, or from the National Parks Service.

SWIMMING WITH GREBES
OR
How to Raise a Family by Observation

by Geoff Sitch.



A lone Hoary-Headed Grebe visited our dam at Muckleford n the Summer of '80-'81. It stayed for several weeks, then isappeared.

We use the dam for swimming in the hot weather and t was interesting to observe he evasive action the bird ook when one of us approached too closely. During the hole of its stay, it didn't ly once, but ducked under he surface, re-appearing wenty or more feet away.

This summer, two birds ppeared in early December. gain we noticed early that t he birds seemed to lose the desire for flight, diving was the only vasive action.

A trial nest was built on a partly submerged branch, but was abandoned in favour of a nest constructed around the stems of a large reed. The nest is ingeneously constructed to float up and down with the water level changes. The main material used was the weed (an alga) that grows on the bottom of the dam. Some sticks and leaves were added, but I couldn't work out their purpose.

Five eggs were laid over a period of ten days, three early and the remaining two later. The eggs were a pale brown with deeper brown spots, about an inch long and 5/8 inch wide. The sitting bird quickly camoflaged the eggs before leaving the nest, and after the first week did not spend much day time sitting. Apparantly the warmth of the sun and the water was sufficiently high.

We were beginning to think that the eggs were infertile, and that the mother had left the nest, when, after 3 weeks, 3 small birds, remarkably like floating chickens, were seen with the parent birds.

From time to time the small birds vanished and we were at loss to discover where they were hiding, (they couldn't dive at this stage) when one day mother bird stretched her wings and there, on her back were the baby birds.

After a week the young birds could dive. Evasive action only as the parents were still feeding them. At this time we noticed that there was a fourth baby, and I was convinced that the fifth egg was addled, but five days later there were five young ones on the water. The first three being much larger, only the fourth and

Cont p 3.

W.V.F.N.C.A. CALPOUT, WEEKEND 24-25 APRIL 1982

Host Club - Bendigo

Venue - Rotary Camp, Axedale
Accomodation - Dormitary type, with kitchen , showers etc
If you wish to camp, please see Ern or Rita for detail

Saturday

Morning

Informal activities in vicinity.

1 Birdwatching along Campaspe River.
2 Axedale fish farm.
3 Lake Eppalock dam wall.
4 Sugarloaf Range.

Lunch 12.00

Afternoon

Depart 1.00 p.m.

Excursion to Permian glaciated pavements at Moorabbee (Lake Eppalock), and the Pink Cliffs at Heathcote.

Return by 5.00 p.m.

Evening

6.30 p.m. W.V.F.N.C.A. delegates meeting Dinner.
B.F.N.C. sound-slide presentation on the Bendigo area.
8.00 p.m. General meeting.
Welcome address by Chris Bunn, B.F.N.C. President.
Slides and talk, "From South-west Tasmania to Cape York", by Rob Watkins.

Supper (provided by B.F.N.C.).

Sunday

Depart 10.00 a.m.

All day excursion to Barfold Gorge on the Campaspe River.
If there is time, side trips to Turpins Falls (Campaspe River) and Coliban Falls (Coliban River) may be made.

Leaders: Laurie Leeson and Eric Wilkinson.

Return by 4.00 p.m.

THE GARDEN OF ST. ERTH

This is a summary of a guide pamphlet from the Garden of St. Erth.

The house was built by a Cornish stonemason in the 1860's, and named after his birthplace.

The first garden is an English garden, with a double border and trees from all over the world. A bush garden is divided from the English garden by a screen of Blackwoods and a transition area of Rhodoendrons.

There is a newly made dam containing water lilies and water hawthorn, a soft fruit garden an orchard and a vegetable garde near another dam, the bank of which is planted with natives.

A rock garden is in the making and a herb garden is establis ed.

An effort is being made to clearly label all plants, but the garden is still being developed.

Gardeners note - there are surplus plants for sale.

The pamphlet also recommends a nearby nature reserve, which also sounds as if it will be worth a visit if there is time.

CALENDAR 1982

Friday, March 12

At the invitation of Mr John Warden who was to be the speaker, Mr Rob Wallis, Editor of the 'Victorian Naturalist' and Senior Lecturer in Biology at Victoria College, Rusden Campus, is to be our guest speaker. His subject will be the Mammals of the Castlemaine District.

Saturday March 13

Outing to the Garden of St Erth, leaving the Education Centre at 10.30 am. Take a picnic lunch.

April

There will be no meeting or outing on the usual days, due to the Easter period, however the Committee has decided to make the W.V.F.N.C.A. Campout at Axedale the official program for the Club for the Month of April. See inside for details.

Friday May 14

Mr Rueben Kent - Orchids

Saturday May 15

Outing to Maldon - Geology

June - Members night

- Outing to Firth Park, Trentham East - Fungi.

General meetings are held on the second Friday of the month at 8pm in the Education Centre, Castlemaine.
Outings usually take place on the following Saturday, leaving the Education centre at 1.30 pm, after organizing people into cars, etc.
Business meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month, at 8 pm in the Ed. Centre. Any interested member is invited to attend these meetings.
Any alterations to the above arrangements will be notified.
Members of the public, visitors and intending members are always welcome to attend meetings or outings.

President;	Mr G. Broadway	Ph 72 2513
Secretary:	Mrs M. Lindsay	72 2720
Treasurer:	Mr F. Meyer	72 1958
Newsletter:	Mrs R. Mills	-

Contributions to the Newsletter may be left at Tonks Bros., 224 Barker St.